

# **ARMU Chronological History**

## **Pre 1960's**

- The Administrator formed the Antiquities Committee.

## **1960's**

- The Administrator built a fire proof vault in the Old Administration Building (Main Street upstairs Post Office)
- Caribbean Historical Association and UWI prompted UNESCO to sponsor listing of Leeward Islands records.
- **1965** - Mr. C.L. Barker, a historian, visited the Virgin Islands and did basic sorting, listing and labelling of records. He produced a report "Records of the Leeward Islands" with a section on VI records.

## **1970's**

- Under Secretary to the Governor, Mrs. Otis Baronville did 3 weeks training in Guyana. She held keys to the Archives.
- **1973** - Under the Deputy Governor, Chief Librarian Verna Penn-Moll offered the Deputy Governor the Public Library's assistance until other provision for the Archives was made. Library Assistant Janice Nibbs was encouraged to take an interest in the Archives. She subsequently attended 2 regional workshops.
- **1975** - Jamaican Archivist Clinton Black (UNESCO sponsored) visited and submitted a report with recommendations.
- **1976** - Stephen Parker of the British Council under UK Technical Aid visited and advised on the Archives Building accommodation.

## **1980's**

- The Public Library and Janice Nibbs salvaged records which some departments were dumping .
- Reports with recommendations were submitted by Verna Penn-Moll (1982) and Clinton Black (1984).

## **1990's**

- Clinton Black's recommendations were totally ignored. The Archives room was not air-conditioned. Members of the Public were let in and many records disappeared. Conditions deteriorated.
- **1991** - Chief Librarian, Bernadine Louis submitted a report to the Deputy Governor to develop a short term plan for restoration and further development of the Archives. This arose out of an inability to service requests for genealogical and other historical information.
- **1994** - Discussions with CARBICA (Caribbean Archives Association) to provide assistance with Archives. Brian Speirs and Roger Craig visited the VI and toured the archives.
- **1995** - Speirs and Craig completed their recommendations and sent their work on Archives legislation to the Attorney General's Chambers.
- **1996** - At the behest of the Deputy Governor, an Archives Restoration Committee was formed and had its first meeting on May 14th. The committee's Terms of Reference: To advise on practical measures to restore and maintain the territory's Archives.

- **1997-1998** - Under the Deputy Governor, Victoria Lemieux, Ag. Archivist of the University of the West Indies was sponsored by the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) and Commonwealth Foundation Aid Fund to visit and advise Government on introducing an integrated records and Archives programme.

- **1999** - Plans for work to be done on the Archives as part of the Millennium Project of the Virgin Islands.

## **2000's**

- **2001-2002** - Through poor planning and disregard for protocol, historical documents including deeds and wills from 1779 - 1826 were destroyed. This prompted great concern over the state of affairs of the Archives. An audit report, pursuant to the Audit Ordinance section 11(4) was submitted to the Deputy Governor and the Governor.

- **2004** - Under the Deputy Governor, Verna Penn-Moll was appointed Chief Records Management Officer. The post was later updated to include Archives Project Coordinator. By November, Mrs. Moll, with the help of John Cantwell, an archivist volunteer from the British Executive Service (BESO) cleared the infected, termite eaten records from the nucleus of the Archives and had them incinerated. The room was then renovated and air conditioned to bring it closer to archive environment standards.

- **2006** - Archivists Dr. Gail Saunders and Mrs. Elaine Toote visited from the Bahamas to consult on bringing older records from the 1850's into a functional facility, i.e. for easy retrieval of information for research. Indexing according to international standards was their principal task. In June, they submitted a report with recommendations.

- **2007** - Archivists Saunders and Toote returned to the VI in June to continue work under the Terms of Reference of their consultancy.

- September, under the Deputy Governor, Christopher Varlack was appointed the territory's first Government Archivist, a post for which provision had been made in General Orders of 1971.

- December, Kelvin Smith, a 40 year employee of The National Archives in London and a consultant with the International Records Management Trust (IRMT), visited to conduct consultancy for a proposal with cost and estimates for a new archives building and an integrated RM and Archives programme.

- **2008** - Archives consultant Kelvin Smith returned in August to complete terms of his consultancy and conducted a series of Records Appraisal workshops. He assisted with vetting of Archives legislation, fine tuning of revised file classification scheme and investigation of options for Electronic Records Management.

- Approved by Cabinet, a site selection committee comprised of the Town Planner, the Sister Islands Coordinator and Chief Records Management Officer was established to investigate the best suited location for the proposed archives building. Their findings were sent to Cabinet for consideration.

- The Temporary Records Centre at MacNamara was renovated to begin accepting non-current records from Government offices.

- Contract signed for installation of state of the art fire suppression system at the Archives strong room to ensure enhanced protection against fire damage.

- Drafting of plans to introduce Electronic Records Management was initiated.